

DERIVATION OF NAMES FROM COSTUME. Cont.

Gildersleeve would have been hard to miss in a crowd – his is a nick-name for a showy dresser, literally ‘golden-sleeve’. It’s one of the few sleeve-derived names. Names derived from the glove include the diminutive **Gauntlett**, **Gaunt**, **Gant**, and **Gaunter**. **Broadbelt** is found chiefly in Cheshire, as is **Bracegirdle**, who would have been a maker of belts for holding up breeches – from the Old English *brec*, breeches, and *gyrdel*, belt. There are also some very descriptive names from past centuries, like Henry **Fairgirdle** and Adam **Whitbelt**.

Hose and **Hosier** would have been makers of leggings (the regular name for garments worn on the legs until the eighteenth century), but are relatively rare names because many of them have been swallowed up by **House** – for instance, **Shorthouse** is more common than **Shorthose**. **Gaiter**, found also as **Gayter**, **Gater Gayter**, **Geator**, often derives from the old French for watchman, *gaiteor*, rather than a maker of legwear. **Stockings**, too, is more likely to have been someone who lived by an upturned treestump or forest clearing than a stocking-maker. **Buskin**, though is a form of buckskin, which would have been used for various garments. **Slipper** is certainly an occupational name relating to costume, but he had nothing to do with footwear – he was a sword-sharpener.

There’s quite a large group of colour nicknames which may also be related to costume – for example, **Brown** could be a nickname for someone who always wore that colour, and **Black**, **White** and **Grey** occasionally belong there too. (**Greens**, however are usually from ‘atte green’ or ‘de la greene’, and so are local habitation names). **Blankett**, **Blewitt** or **Bluet**, **Blunkett**, **Plunkett**, **Russett**, **Scarlett** are all colour names, and were often used in Middle English to represent certain materials that were commonly made in those colours. **Ray**, a kind of striped cloth, is often mentioned in Middle English, and may have given rise to some instances of that surname.

Lambswool too, appears to describe costume, and **Woolward**, and **Woolard** may well come from the Middle English word *wulleward*, which meant ‘clothed in wool’.

Aside from actual clothes, there are all sorts of names derived from the ornamentation that goes with any costume. Elaborate ‘extras’ would have distinguished people, and it’s easy to see how nicknames could have arisen. **Staff**, **Clubb**, **Birdon** (a pilgrim’s staff) are obvious examples, while **Kidgell**, **Kiggel**, **Kitchell** and **Ketchell** are from the Middle English *kycgel*, a cudgel. There are also lots of compound descriptive names from Staff, like **Tipstaff**, **Blackstaff**, **Hardstaff**, **Longstaff**. It’s useful to bear in mind, though, that some of these may have been nicknames from physical attribute rather than costume.

Finally, even jewellery has left us some costume names. **Ring** and **Goldring** were makers and wearers of gold jewellery. **Ribbans**, although he sounds highly decorated, was originally a derivation of the Flemish name Rubens, itself a derivative of Rupert. **Golden**, and **Goulden** may also have been famed for their gold decoration, or their skills in crafting the precious metal.

If your name is **Diamond**, though, your ancestors will unfortunately not have been decked out in splendid jewellery – quite the opposite, in fact. The name comes from **Dayman**, meaning ‘servant of David’.

End. Transcribed by Helen Kindt.

BOOKS on NAMES.

Sitting on our shelves are quite a few books pertaining to names. Some are devoted to surnames, others to first names. They make interesting reading. For instance did you know that :

Agatha means good.

Aubrey: elf rule.

Basil: kingly

Barbara: foreign.

Charles: manly.

Corrina: maiden

Diana: goddess.

Dudley: from the surname.

Eric: sole ruler.

Esme: beloved.

Fay: faith/fairy.

Felix: happy.

Gloria: glorious.

Gilbert: bright hostage.

Hector: holding fast.

Hilary: cheerful.

Ida: labour

Ira: watchful.

Jared: descent.

Jess: form of Janet.

Penelope: weaver.

Philip: lover of horses.

Queenie: from queen.

Quintin: fifth.

Rhys: impetuous man.

Rosemary: from the plant.

Salome: perfect or peace.

Sean: another for John.

Tabitha: gazelle.

Timothy: honoured of God.

Wendy: an invention of J.M. Barries.

Zoe: life